United Nations S/PV.8228

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8228th meeting
Tuesday, 10 April 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Meza-Cuadra	(Peru)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh/Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Poland	Mr. Radomski
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-10187 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Canada, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2018/175, S/2018/321 and S/2018/322, which contain the texts of three draft resolutions, respectively.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution contained in document S/2018/321, submitted by Canada, France, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): For years, as part of its responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security, the Security Council has been mobilized on the issue of chemical weapons. After the chemical attacks in Ghouta in 2013, the Security Council adopted resolution 2118 (2013), which provided for the complete dismantling of the chemical arsenal of the Syrian regime. Russia, as co-sponsor of that resolution, had guaranteed its implementation. Despite that guarantee, the Damascus regime has never complied with its obligations under resolution 2118 (2013) and has never renounced — as we saw again on 7 April — the use of chemical weapons against its civilian population.

Five years after the Council's adoption of resolution 2118 (2013), we note that the general subject of chemical weapons remains tragically topical. The upcoming voting marks our fourth meeting in less than a week on this issue. Yesterday we met in an emergency meeting (see S/PV.8225) following a new chemical-weapons massacre in Douma, Syria, whose appalling images left us shocked. Last month we met to discuss the unacceptable attack in Salisbury (see S/PV.8203). Last year we met day after day after the terrible attack of Khan Shaykhun. That shows the deterioration of the situation and how serious the stakes are today for our security.

The use of chemical weapons is so abominable that it has been banned for almost 100 years, and the international community began years ago to eliminate them. As such, the chemical non-proliferation regime, which we have patiently developed and strengthened, is one of the pillars of our collective security architecture, at the heart of our security system. Yet today it is under serious threat. We face the cynical, barbaric and all-out use of chemical weapons against civilian populations.

The Douma attacks once again illustrated the abject brutality of the Syrian regime's resolute military strategy. Such acts constitute war crimes or even crimes against humanity. They increase the risk of dangerous normalization — tolerating the return of these agents of fear and death is nothing more than a blank cheque to all those who would like to use them. To allow the normalization of the use of chemical weapons without responding is to let the genie of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction — which pose an existential threat to us all — out of the bottle. It would mark a serious and reprehensible setback to the international order that we have all patiently helped to develop. The consequences would be terrible, and we would all pay the price.

That is why we cannot accept it. France will do all it can to prevent impunity for the use of chemical weapons. It is in that spirit that we launched an international partnership last January. The demise of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in November, due to the Russian veto to protect Al-Assad's regime, sent a dangerous signal of impunity. It deprived us of an essential deterrent tool. It left a vacuum that the Syrian regime has rushed to exploit, and which yesterday's atrocities have tragically reminded us of.

The American initiative to re-establish an independent mechanism, based on a balanced approach and taking into account the concerns expressed by every member of the Council, enables us to fill that glaring void. Such a mechanism would support the inquiry that has already been launched by the OPCW. It would also respect the essential criteria of independence,

without any interference, and impartiality to which each member of the Council has committed. Such a mechanism would have a mandate to attribute responsibility for the attacks. Only the combination of those two criteria — independence and a mandate to attribute responsibility — will make that mechanism effective, and therefore dissuasive. Let me be clear: in view of the gravity of the 7 April attack, France will not accept any third-rate or sham mechanism whose independence and impartiality would not be genuinely ensured. That is what the Security Council owes today to the Syrian victims of chemical attacks and to the entire international community, whose security is threatened by the chemicals in the hands of the regime of Bashar Al-Assad.

Since the threat is of an existential nature for us all, combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction must, more than ever, be among the top priorities of the Security Council. If there is one area in which the Council has a moral and political responsibility to convene and act, it is this one. If there is one domain for which the credibility of the Council is at stake, where tactical games have no place, it is this one.

This is one of those moments when we have no choice but to act because what is at stake is essential. We cannot allow the chemical non-proliferation regime, and with it our entire security architecture — along with the principles and values that underpin our action — to crack and disintegrate before our very eyes. Today's vote is one of those key moments, one of those moments of truth. On behalf of France, I therefore call on each member of the Council to properly gauge and assume its responsibilities now and to vote in favour of the American draft resolution (S/2018/321).

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): We have reached a decisive moment as the Security Council. On Saturday the first haunting images appeared from Douma, in Syria. We gathered around this table yesterday (see S/PV.8225) to express our collective outrage. We then collectively agreed that the Council needed to take steps to determine exactly what happened in Douma and to put an end to these barbaric attacks.

The United States has put forward a draft resolution (S/2018/321) that accomplishes those shared goals. For weeks we have been working with every single delegation on the Council to develop a new attribution mechanism for chemical-weapons attacks in Syria. We held open and transparent negotiations so that every delegation could provide its input. And we went the extra mile for one Council member. We adopted paragraph after paragraph of Russia's proposed draft resolution (S/2018/175). We tried to take every Russian proposal that did not compromise the impartiality, independence or professionalism of a new attribution mechanism.

After the Douma attack, we updated our draft resolution with common sense changes. Our proposal condemns the attack. It demands unhindered humanitarian access for the people in Douma. It calls on the parties to give maximum cooperation to the investigation. And it creates the attribution mechanism that we worked so hard with each member to develop.

The draft resolution is the bare minimum that the Council can do to respond to the attack. The United States did everything possible to work towards Council unity on this text. Again, we accepted every recommendation that did not compromise the impartiality and independence of the proposed attribution mechanism.

I want to say a brief word about Russia's draft resolution, which is also before us for a vote. Our draft resolutions are similar, but there are important differences. The key point is that our draft resolution guarantees that any investigations will truly be independent. Russia's draft resolution gives Russia itself the chance to choose the investigators and then to assess the outcome. There is nothing independent about that. The United States is not asking to choose the investigators, and neither should Russia. The United States is not asking to review the findings of any investigation before they are final, and neither should Russia. All of us say that we want an independent investigation. Our draft resolution achieves that goal. Russia's does not. This is not an issue that more time or more consultations could have resolved. At a certain point, you are either for an independent and impartial investigation or you are not. And now that the Douma attack has happened, this is not a decision that we can delay any longer.

The United States calls on all Security Council members to vote in favour of our draft resolution and to abstain or vote against the Russian draft resolution. The Syrian people are counting on us.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Today the delegation of the United States is once again trying to mislead the international

community and is taking yet another step towards confrontation by putting to a vote a draft resolution (S/2018/321) that does not enjoy the unanimous support of the members of the Security Council.

It is not true that it meets almost all our requirements. The text is nothing more than an attempt to resurrect, unchanged, the former Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), established to investigate cases of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Russia has always emphasized that it will not support that approach. The JIM became a puppet in the hands of anti-Damascus forces, and it covered itself with shame when it issued a guilty verdict for a sovereign State without credible evidence. The American draft resolution represents an identical reproduction of all of the former Mechanism's flawed working methods. The new mechanism would conduct investigations as it sees fit, with no reference to the standards of the Chemical Weapons Convention. That has nothing to do with independence, which the draft resolution's sponsors and its closest allies only pretend to care about. We know the worth of such independence. It is true anarchy and manipulation.

At every stage of our work on the American initiative we have insisted that the Secretary-General should select the staff for the investigative mechanism on the basis of the broadest possible geographic representation, with subsequent approval by the Security Council. Visits to the sites of the incidents and strict adherence to the principle of sequential actions while ensuring the preservation of the material evidence should be not optional but mandatory working principles. In a collective decision, the Security Council would determine who was responsible in any given case of the use of chemical weapons, based on reliable evidence that would leave no room for doubt about the correctness of the conclusions. There is nothing about this in the American draft resolution. The authors know that it goes against the Russian position and will not be adopted. But they are obstinately sticking to their line.

It is clear that today's provocative step has nothing to do with a desire to investigate what happened in Douma, Syria, on 7 April. An attributive mechanism is not necessary in order to initially establish the facts. Even if we could conceive of the improbable scenario in which the draft resolution creating the mechanism was adopted today, it would take several months to put the mechanism together and fine-tune its operations. Establishing who is to blame is the final link in a very long chain of actions. Here, in front of everyone, I would once again like to ask the sponsors why they need the mechanism when they have already identified the guilty parties before the investigation. They do not need it. They do not want to hear anything. They do not want to hear that no traces of a chemical attack were found in Douma. They have simply been looking for an excuse the whole time, and the provocateurs among the White Helmets have very kindly provided it. This is all reminiscent of a kind of spring fever. Exactly a year ago, in April 2017, a similar scenario unrolled with the chemical provocation in Khan Shaykhun, followed by a missile strike.

The fact is that the authors of the draft resolution are motivated by completely different priorities. They have pinned their hopes on the assumption that the draft resolution will not be adopted. That is what they want, and it is something that they can bank along with the rest of their reasons justifying the use of force against Syria. For several days now, the Administration in Washington, D.C., has been keeping the international community in suspense while discussing the so-called important decisions being prepared. Only yesterday we heard how anxiously Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura spoke about the current escalation extending beyond Syria's borders (see S/PV.8225), and we know that the Secretary-General is also very concerned about that.

It is clear that Russia will once again be the target of the propaganda cannons. My American colleague will painstakingly enumerate the Russian vetoes on Syria. It is not impossible that she has taken upon herself a capitalist commitment to using the reckless policies of the United States to achieve some sort of personal record in that regard. We are using the veto to protect international law, peace and security and to ensure that the United States does not to drag the Security Council into its misadventures. The United States representative says that we are covering up for someone. Russia is in Syria at the invitation of its lawful Government in order to combat international terrorism, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, while the United States is covering up for militias and terrorists.

If the United States has decided to carry out an illegal military venture — and we still hope that it will think better of it — it must answer for that itself. It wants to dump this draft resolution, which has been sitting on the shelf for a long time, onto the Security Council in order to find a pretext. The United States representative

herself has said repeatedly that if the Council does not make a decision, the United States will make a decision on its own. Why is the suta purposely undermining the Council's authority by promoting a draft resolution that we know will not go through? And a lot of people said that yesterday during consultations. We urge the Americans to give sober consideration to the potential this presents for confrontation, to think better of it and to withdraw its draft resolution from a vote. Russia cannot support it.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall first put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2018/321, submitted by Canada, France, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:
Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America

Against:
Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Russian Federation

Abstaining:
China

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution received 12 votes in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): This is a sad day for the Security Council; it is a sad day for the cause of universal norms and standards; and it is a sad day for the non-proliferation regime. But, above all, it is a very sad day for the people of Douma, who now are without the protection that the international system was set up to provide for them.

This is the fourth time in six days that the Council has discussed chemical weapons. Yesterday 14 members of the Security Council called for an investigation. Several members called on the permanent five (P-5) to assume their responsibilities to uphold the universal prohibition on weapons of mass destruction (WMD). As a P-5 member, the United Kingdom was ready to do that and was joined by France and the United States. Conversely, by vetoing, Russia has crossed a line in the international order, and worse, if possible, history is repeating itself one year on from Khan Shaykun.

Russia helped to create the original independent investigation that attributed Khan Shaykun to the Syrian regime and concluded that sarin, which can be developed only by a State actor, had been used. But last autumn, Russia vetoed renewal of that mechanism on not one but three occasions. The reason is clear: it is because Russia would rather cross the WMD line than risk sanction of its ally Syria. Instead, we are asked to believe that the Russian version of this latest attack should be the one that the Security Council believes.

Russia is not authorized by the Security Council to carry out an investigation in Syria. Russia says that there were no traces of a chemical attack. No traces were found by whom? I repeat: Russia is not authorized to carry out an investigation on behalf of the Security Council. We need an independent investigative mechanism for that purpose, and only that sort of mechanism can have the confidence of the Security Council, the confidence of the membership of the United Nations and the confidence of the people of Syria.

Sadly, reports of chemical-weapon attacks in Syria have continued since the original Russian veto, in November. It has become very clear that Russia will do what it takes to protect Syria, whatever the compelling evidence of the crimes committed, and to shut down further investigation and discussion of those crimes. This has come at the cost of Russia's own obligations and credibility as a permanent member of the Council, as a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention and as a declared and supposed supporter of peace in Syria.

The Security Council has been unable to act solely because Russia has abused the power of veto to protect Syria from international scrutiny for the use of chemical weapons against the Syrian people. Even today open-source investigations have located a chlorine cylinder, the same kind that the Joint Investigative Mechanism has found that the Syrian regime used, atop a house in Douma full of people who had clearly died from respiratory problems.

I frankly doubt that in 48 hours Russia has verified all similar reports and can conclude that they are all fake. They are not fake; they need to be looked at and investigated by a proper independent mechanism such as the Council was prepared today to pass.

Russia's credibility as a member of the Council is now in question. We will not stand idly by and watch Russia continue to undermine the global norms that have ensured the security of all of us, including Russia, for decades. As a P-5 member, the United Kingdom will stand up for international peace and security; it is our moral duty. It is a matter of shame that Russia has once again blocked a draft resolution. The Russian Ambassador mentioned that it was not a question of counting the number of Russian vetoes. I beg to differ. To quote Lenin, quantity has a quality all of its own. Russia's actions today are a step against the rules and authority of the Security Council and the wider United Nations. They are a step against international peace and security and non-proliferation, and they are a step against humanity.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China is deeply concerned at reports that the use of chemical weapons has caused civilian deaths and casualties in Syria. We are firmly opposed to the use of chemical weapons by any country, organization or individual, under any circumstances. This has been China's clear and consistent position.

China supports the carrying out of a comprehensive, objective and impartial investigation into the use of chemical weapons in Syria so as to achieve results that are based on substantial evidence and can pass the litmus test of history and truth, bringing the perpetrators and the parties responsible for the use of chemical weapons to justice. There should be no prejudgment of the outcome or arbitrary conclusions.

The Security Council has a consensus on condemning the chemical-weapons attacks in Syria, establishing a new investigative mechanism and identifying the perpetrators of the chemical-weapon attack in Syria. All members of the Security Council should remain united and insist that the Council and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons be the main channel for dealing with the Syrian chemical-weapon issue, in an effort to seek an appropriate solution through consultations.

The draft resolution that was just put to the vote in the Security Council (S/2018/321) had elements of consensus, including condemning the chemical-weapons attacks in Syria, establishing a new investigative mechanism and urging all parties to cooperate with the investigation. However, on some specific measures, it does not take full consideration of some of the major concerns of certain Security Council members on improving the mechanism's working methods and ensuring an objective and impartial investigation. Against that backdrop and in the light of our long-standing position on the question of chemical weapons in Syria, China abstained in the voting on the draft resolution.

The issue of Syria is currently at a critical juncture. China remains firmly seized of the situation and is deeply concerned at the developments on the ground. China has always called for respecting the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria and insists on seeking a peaceful solution to the dispute. We oppose the use or threat of force in international relations and believe that any action taken should be in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The international community and all parties concerned should stand firm on the imperative need to seek a political solution to the question of Syria, step up their support for the United Nations main channel of mediation, and push for all Syrian parties to seek a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political solution to the question of Syria, in accordance with resolution 2254 (2015).

China is ready to work with all parties in an effort to push for a political solution to the issue of Syria.

Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution initiated by the United States (S/2018/321) for two main reasons.

With regard to the first reason, Côte d'Ivoire believes that the draft resolution conforms to our firm belief that any and all use of chemical weapons in wartime as in peacetime must be condemned and requires investigation to determine those responsible for such acts to hold them accountable. In that regard, the draft resolution submitted by the United States clearly conveys the resolve of the international community to see perpetrators of chemical attacks identified and prosecuted so that they are accountable for their acts.

Concerning the second reason, Côte d'Ivoire believes that the text of the draft resolution provides

guarantees with regard to the credibility of the outcome of investigations. The text insulates such investigations from any political influence and clears a path for the experts' professionalism and independence and the impartiality of the mechanism itself.

By voting in favour of the draft resolution, the Ivorian delegation wanted to show its solidarity with Syrian victims who are suffering from the consequences of an endless war and to help meaningfully safeguard international peace and security. Sadly, my delegation notes that divisiveness within the Security Council prevented the adoption of the American draft resolution, which Côte d'Ivoire painfully regrets. It is time that efforts be made to unify the Council if we want truly to work to achieve international peace and security.

Mr. Radomski (Poland): The use of chemical weapons is a serious atrocity, which may amount to a crime against humanity and a war crime. Accountability for such acts is a requirement under international law — and central to achieving sustainable peace in Syria. Draft resolution S/2018/321, presented by the United States, addressed the most pressing needs related to the use of chemical weapons in Syria, including the role of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and its Fact-finding Mission, securing humanitarian access and, last but not least, creating a new, truly independent and impartial accountability mechanism. We thank the American delegation for its ongoing leadership in the negotiations. We appreciate its flexibility and fully understand and share the rationale behind putting this text to the vote today.

Because of the use of the veto by the Russian Federation, the Security Council failed once again today to establish an accountability mechanism. By that act, Russia undermined the ability of the Council to fulfil its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations: to maintain international peace and security. We are disappointed that, for some States, political alliances and calculations proved to be more important than the need to end the horrors confronting the civilian population and the unacceptable loss of human life in Syria.

Poland supports the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, the Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, and other instruments that might facilitate bringing the perpetrators of chemical attacks to justice. We will join all genuine efforts to achieve that goal.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia reiterates in the strongest terms its categorical condemnation of the use of chemical weapons and the weaponization of chemical agents as an unjustifiable and criminal act, wherever, whenever and by whomever they are committed, as such use constitutes a serious crime under international law and a threat to international peace and security. There is no justification for their use regardless of the circumstances and of who uses them. We therefore reaffirm the need to maintain the unity of the Security Council so as to ensure that those who have used chemical weapons are held accountable and brought to justice so that their actions do not go unpunished.

In that regard, we reiterate our support for the work being carried out by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and its Fact-finding Mission so that, in line with their mandates, they can carry out the work entrusted to them in the most methodical, technical and trustworthy manner possible with the support of an independent, impartial, complete and conclusive investigation. We firmly reiterate that the work of an investigative mechanism is essential to ensuring accountability for such terrible acts. To that end, it must be independent, impartial and representative so that a transparent, impartial, complete, reliable and conclusive investigation can be carried out, and, for that to happen, we face the great challenge and the responsibility of not politicizing or instrumentalizing the Security Council.

My delegation voted against the draft resolution (S/2018/321) presented by the United States of America, first of all, because we regret that once again a draft resolution was put to the vote with the knowledge that it would not be adopted by the Security Council, and, moreover, because there has already been a series of threats of the use of force accompanied by threats of unilateral action, which, of course, runs directly counter to the Charter of the United Nations. Bolivia once again makes clear its firm rejection of taking unilateral actions, because any unilateral military action that does not enjoy the approval of the Security Council is entirely illegal and contravenes the principles explicitly set forth in the Charter. In addition, any unilateral

military action would violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Arab Republic of Syria, and would affect the stability of the political process and the agreements on which progress has been made under the auspices of the United Nations.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): In my statement yesterday (see S/PV.8225) I urged the Security Council not to stand idly by and watch as a spectator while chemical weapons were being used in Syria. In our opinion, the Council should act, condemn, protect, and hold to account those responsible. Those elements are all reflected in draft resolution (S/2018/321) put forward by the United States, and that is why the Kingdom of the Netherlands voted in favour of that draft resolution. We thank the United States delegation for drafting the text. We appreciate the earlier rounds of negotiations and the flexibility displayed at yesterday's late-night round. Together with others, we are extremely disappointed that an attempt to set up an effective mechanism of attribution on the use of chemical weapons has failed once again.

Today we witnessed the twelfth overall Russian use of the veto concerning Syria, including six pertaining to chemical weapons. As I said yesterday, if the Russian representative claims that the chemical-weapons attack in Syria is a fabrication, he should not veto the draft resolution. By vetoing this draft resolution, the Russian Federation assumes a heavy responsibility for continued impunity and the horrible use of chemical weapons in Syria. Because of this permanent member, the Council is not even able to condemn the use of chemical-weapons attacks this past weekend in Douma, during which the White Helmets once again demonstrated their unwavering commitment to their life-saving work in the most difficult circumstances.

With regard to the draft resolution proposed by the Russian Federation (S/2018/175), the Netherlands will vote against it. That draft resolution falls short in every possible way. It seems that the Russian Federation is unable to support an independent and impartial investigative mechanism. It seems that it can accept a mechanism only in which itself can decide when, where, how and by whom the investigation would be conducted, while leaving the mandate attributed to the Council subject to its veto.

This cannot be the end of the issue. The Security Council cannot remain passive in the face of the atrocities being committed in Syria. We must continue to work for an effective attribution mechanism, inside and outside the Security Council. Impunity must not prevail.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution contained in document S/2018/175, submitted by the Russian Federation.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Before I speak about the draft resolution before us (S/2018/175), I would like to say that I am very happy that my British colleague is familiar with the classic works of Marxism-Leninism, although that is hardly surprising, because Marx, Engels and Lenin were frequent visitors to London — indeed, Marx is buried there. But I would like to cite another quotation from Lenin, who wrote an article entitled "Better Fewer, but Better".

After the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) on the use of chemical weapons in Syria ended, in November of last year, it was Russia that found itself in the forefront of the efforts to fill the resulting gap. We drafted a resolution on the issue that we submitted to our colleagues for their consideration on 23 January. The Western camp immediately gave the draft text a hostile reception, since it eliminated the loopholes that enabled investigations to be manipulated and handed over to the control of the opponents of Damascus, as occurred with the JIM and which was the reason for its premature demise. I want to emphasize that we have not invented anything new in our text, but have merely brought the principles for the work of the new mechanism in line with the standards of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We now have a real opportunity to create a genuinely independent and impartial working mechanism that would help the Security Council to identify those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in the context of the conflict in Syria. All that it needs is for Council members to vote in favour of our draft resolution, and we call on them to do that.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2018/175, submitted by the Russian Federation.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation

Against:

France, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Côte d'Ivoire, Kuwait

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution received 6 votes in favour, 7 votes against and 2 abstentions. The draft resolution was not adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): As I have taken the floor once today already, I will be brief. With regard to Karl Marx, I think he must be turning in his grave to see what the country that was founded on many of his precepts is doing in the name of supporting Syria by condoning the use of chemical weapons on Syrian territory.

We voted against the Russian draft resolution (S/2018/175) for a number of reasons. The Russian text is a distraction. It has lain dormant around the Security Council for weeks. There was no attempt to meet other Council members' concerns in its drafting, unlike the United States text (S/2018/321), which had adapted its original preferences precisely to try to meet those of the Russian Federation and others. The Russian text does nothing to bring a political process any closer. Specifically, it moves the parameters on access and imparts a quasi-judicial standard — "beyond a reasonable doubt" — that is inappropriate for the type of investigation that the Council wishes to establish. If the Russians want a criminal investigation, they could always suggest that we refer the matter to the International Criminal Court. Furthermore, there is selective quoting of the Chemical Weapons Convention to undermine the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, and it takes a selective approach to the parameters of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

But, above all, the text is unacceptable because it seeks to assert that sovereign States are above international law and international norms. That is breathtaking both in its arrogance and its ignorance, and for that reason alone, if not the others, we could not support it.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): Yesterday I said that history will record this moment (see S/PV.8225) as one when we as the Security Council either lived up to our responsibilities or showed our complete failure to protect the Syrian people. Today we have our answer. The votes have been cast. The record will show that today some countries decided to stand up for truth, accountability and justice for the Syrian people.

Most countries saw the horror that took place in Douma last weekend at the hands of the Al-Assad regime and realize that today was a time for action. Month after month, the Al-Assad regime, with the full support of Russia and Iran, has strung the Security Council along. They ignored our calls for a ceasefire, for political dialogue and for deliveries of humanitarian aid. They ignored our calls to stop using chemical weapons — weapons that are universally banned from war. And then, last weekend, the Al-Assad regime forced a moment of reckoning on all of us by gassing people in Douma.

The United States and the countries that joined us today could not allow that attack to go unanswered. The record will not be kind to one permanent member of the Council. Unfortunately, Russia has again chosen the Al-Assad regime over the unity of the Security Council. We have said before that Russia will stop at nothing to shield the Al-Assad regime, and now we have our answer. Russia has trashed the credibility of the Council. It is not interested in unity or compromise. Whenever we propose anything meaningful to Russia, Russia vetoes it. It is a travesty. It has now officially vetoed draft resolutions that would hold Al-Assad accountable for these barbaric chemical attacks six times.

Things did not have to turn out this way. For weeks, the United States has led transparent, good-faith negotiations with all Security Council members to establish an attribution mechanism for chemical weapons in Syria. We started from the simple premise that every Council member would want to know who was responsible for using those barbaric and illegal weapons. We did everything to accommodate Russia's views. Russia surprised us with a proposed draft resolution (S/2018/175), calling all of us into the

Security Council Chamber and handing out the draft text on the spot. After hearing widespread concerns about its draft resolution, Russia moved ahead anyway, accommodating no one's views. We could have done the same, but instead we tried to take as much as we could from Russia's draft text, while maintaining an impartial and independent process. We negotiated in good faith.

Many aspects of our draft resolutions were similar. Russia said that the investigators should have safe access to the places where chemical weapons were used. We agreed. Russia said that it wanted an impartial, independent and professional investigation. We agreed. Russia said that the investigators should be recruited on as wide a geographical basis as possible. We agreed. Russia said that it wanted reports on the activities of non-State actors involving chemical weapons. Although that sounded to us like an attempt to distract from the Al-Assad regime, we included Russia's request. We even gave our mechanism the name that Russia wanted — the United Nations independent mechanism of investigation.

There were really only two key differences between our draft resolution and that of Russia, but those differences speak volumes. First, Russia wanted to give itself the opportunity to approve the investigators who were chosen for the task. Secondly, Russia wanted the Security Council to assess the findings of any investigation before any report was released. Does any of that sound independent or impartial? Russia's proposal was not about an independent and impartial investigation at all. It was all about protecting the Al-Assad regime.

This is a sad day. The United States takes no pleasure in seeing Russia exercise its sixth veto on the issue of chemical weapons in Syria. Only last week, we had hoped that the one-year anniversary of the Khan Shaykun attack might be the start of a renewed partnership to combat chemical weapons. However, those deadly weapons have been used on Syrian families again. When the people of Douma, along with the rest of the international community, looked to the Council to act, one country stood in the way. History will record that. History will record that, on this day, Russia chose to protect a monster over the lives of the Syrian people.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China has stated its principled position on the chemical weapons attack in Syria. The draft resolution on the establishment of a new investigative mechanism submitted by the Russian Federation (S/2018/175) condemns the chemicals weapons attack in Syria and calls for the creation of a new investigative mechanism to establish the facts and the truth. We can all agree on those positive elements.

In addition, it proposes improved working methods compared to previous investigative mechanism and set out concrete steps to carry out a robust on-site investigation on the ground and to ensure impartiality in the process of collecting evidence. As a result, the new investigative mechanism would be able to function with greater professionalism and to reach a truly credible conclusion. Those elements are in line with China's principled position. We support Russia's draft resolution. China regrets that the draft resolution was not adopted.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am taking the floor following the voting on the two draft resolutions (S/2018/175 and S/2018/321) above all to express our frustration over the fact that the Security Council was not able to adopt either the first or the second draft, which sought to give the Council an independent and professional mechanism with a mandate to attribute responsibility for the use of chemical weapons, despite the fact that all Security Council members expressed their desire in that regard. That is precisely why we voted in favour of both draft resolutions in the hope of having a new monitoring mechanism to attribute responsibility so as to protect people from the terrible and harmful effects of such chemical weapons.

Despite the negative outcome of the voting on both draft resolutions, the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, whose position on the use of chemical weapons we have clearly set out during the debates on the issue, wants the members of the Security Council to seek and to explore other alternative draft texts that could merit the joint agreement or the consensus of the Security Council so that we can establish that new mechanism as soon as possible. That is what the people who are suffering, or in the future may suffer, the terrible effects of chemical weapons hope and expect of the Security Council.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): It is indeed regrettable that the Council could not adopt a resolution to establish a new mechanism that would identify those responsible

for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Establishing such a tool would have sent a quick and unified message regarding the resolve of the Council not to tolerate impunity. That is how we view the defeat of both draft resolutions (S/2018/175 and S/2018/321). However, we were not at all surprised.

We voted in favour of both draft resolutions, consistent with our position in reaffirming the importance of setting up an independent, impartial and professional investigative mechanism with a view to ensuring accountability. No doubt, such a mechanism would clearly have addressed the existing institutional gap in that regard, which continues to be a source of major weakness in the fight against impunity.

Both draft resolutions sought the establishment of such a mechanism. Clearly, there are differences, among others, concerning some aspects of the accountability mechanism. We believe that we have come some distance in bridging those differences. It would have been a major achievement, both functionally and from the point of view of enhancing trust, which is so greatly needed in order to address the challenge not only of ensuring non-proliferation but also of advancing the cause of international peace and security. That was why we were hoping that we could achieve consensus on the matter and unity within the Council.

Frankly speaking, we do not like what we see. At the risk of sounding self-righteous — and the challenge that we face makes taking the risk appropriate — we must say that we are deeply disappointed about the situation that we are in. Since we have no alternative, it remains important that we all persevere in continuing our dialogue and supporting the efforts to ensure unity, without which the Council will not be in a position to discharge its principal responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, in particular repairing the damage to the chemical weapons disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Yesterday, we expressed our concern about the difficult situation we are currently facing (see S/PV.8225). We do not wish to repeat what we said, but allow me to state in closing that we look forward to handling the issue of the alleged use of chemical weapons in Douma, eastern Damascus, with a greater sense of responsibility. That is how we intend to look at the draft resolution from Russia before us, a draft which, in our view, is relatively similar to the draft resolution informally made available by Sweden yesterday, whenever the Council is ready to handle it.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I support the statement in explanation of vote on the American draft resolution (S/2018/321) made earlier in the meeting by the representative of the United Kingdom, who said that today is actually a sad day. It is a sad day for the non-proliferation regime, and a sad day for civilians — particularly women, children and the elderly — throughout Syria, and specifically Douma in eastern Ghouta. We ask their forgiveness because we have disappointed them once again. The Council has been unable to establish a mechanism that would hold accountable those who commit crimes by using chemical weapons in Syria. We ask their forgiveness because the Council has been unable to put an end to the serious and gross violations of international humanitarian law, human rights law and many Security Council resolutions condemning the use of chemical weapons in Syria. We ask their forgiveness because the Council has been unable to hold to account the perpetrators of crimes related to the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Our position has always been clear. We have called for consensus in the Council on this sensitive issue, which touches on accountability and impunity. We voted in favour of the United States draft resolution because it contains the basic elements that we think are necessary to establish any new accountability mechanism in Syria in order to guarantee its independence, neutrality and professionalism. The mechanism would identify the perpetrators responsible for any chemical attack, and then the Security Council would shoulder its responsibility in terms of sanctions.

We abstained in the voting on the draft resolution presented by the Russian Federation (S/2016/175) because it did not include the elements to which I have referred. It would undermine the credibility of the new mechanism by depriving it of its fundamental terms of reference, namely, to determine whoever is responsible in the event of attacks using chemical weapons. We are very concerned about the result of voting today because it will encourage parties to the conflict to continue using chemical weapons in the absence of accountability.

Kuwait supported the code of conduct whereby the States members of the Security Council would commit to not opposing draft resolutions dealing with crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes. We also

supported the French-Mexican initiative on abstention in the use of the veto in cases of human rights violations.

As a result of the voting today, and based on our commitment to abiding by the four Geneva Conventions and their two Additional Protocols, international humanitarian law and the final outcome of 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, we call again for crimes against humanity and war crimes, as well as humanitarian issues, to receive due attention. That would include allowing the safe and sustainable delivery of humanitarian assistance and medical evacuations, and preventing the siege of residential areas. These should be treated as procedural issues; they should not be subject to a veto so that such human tragedies and sufferings are never repeated.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): Like everyone else, we deeply regret that today the Council was prevented once again from establishing a responsibility-attribution mechanism for the purpose of impartially identifying the perpetrators and organizers of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. I am sure we all share a sense of very tragic déjà vu as we repeat the scenario the Council faced in November when the renewal of the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism was blocked.

However — and I apologize to all of those who are tired of hearing me say this — we will not give up. Efforts to reach an agreement on a responsibility-attribution mechanism must continue, and we support all serious and genuine initiatives that aim to achieve this objective. We stand ready to help facilitatory efforts to find a way forward. Accountability for the use of chemical weapons is crucial. As we have stated before, the Syrian people suffering from more than seven years of conflict deserve no less from us. They want peace and justice, not further military escalation or impunity.

A collective response to the most recent alleged chemical weapons attack in Douma therefore remains urgent and critical. The credibility of the Council is at stake. We must now come together to swiftly condemn the use of chemical weapons in Syria and express alarm at the alleged attack in Douma. We must support an immediate and further investigation through the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and we must demand full, free and safe access without any restrictions or impediments to the fact-finding mission in its immediate deployment to Syria.

Establishing the facts of what has taken place in Douma remains an essential first step towards confirming the alleged use of chemical weapons and finding the truth, and we need independent, impartial attribution of guilt followed by full accountability. The Council must remain seized and live up to its responsibility. That is why we circulated yesterday a draft text aimed at finding common ground. We stand ready to work tirelessly to find agreement on a robust, swift and immediate response. We need to come back together again after the failure that we have just witnessed.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): Our position remains unchanged and consistent. Due to well-known historical reasons, Kazakhstan has always taken a firm and resolute stance of uncompromising condemnation of any use of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. We do so as that is an extremely heinous action and an unacceptable war crime. We have also been in support of attaching paramount importance to the creation of a new investigative mechanism. That has been strongly reiterated, and we have pressed for its urgency. Impunity for chemical crimes is not acceptable. It sends the wrong signal to those who continue to use or intend to use such an extremely heinous weapon. However, in order to punish anyone, we must be able to prove guilt completely and irrefutably. In that regard, the creation of a full-fledged, impartial and independent investigative tool is of the utmost necessity for all.

We have worked in earnest with the delegations of the United States and the Russian Federation. We must recognize that the use of chemical weapons in Syria continues, along with the persistent threat of chemical terrorism, to present a grave reality. In addition, many allegations of the use of chemical agents in Syria are still undisclosed. Based on the aforementioned circumstances and understanding the need to preserve this mechanism, we supported both draft resolutions intended to create new investigative mechanisms. We urge that we all work together for the maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): This meeting is an interesting one from a variety of perspectives. One is that Lenin and Marx, two anti-imperialists, have been invoked more than once. What we have seen today is related to that topic. It is a fact that all empires are under the illusion that they are morally superior to the rest of us, that they believe themselves to be exceptional and indispensable and that they are above the law. In this, as in other cases, they do not seek to advance democracy or

freedom, but rather ultimately to expand their power and domination worldwide.

What we have seen today is a sad reflection of what is happening on the battlefield in Syria and of those interests. I would like to echo the words of the Swedish Ambassador in urging the Security Council not to rest until we are united and can reach consensus, if indeed we believe in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It is the Charter, and whether the members of the Council can fulfil it, that is ultimately at stake. One of our responsibilities under it is to refrain from taking unilateral action. We hope that principle will be honoured.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution contained in document S/2018/322, submitted by the Russian Federation.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We too are sorry that our draft resolution (S/2018/175) was not adopted today, but at the moment neither it nor the United States draft resolution (S/2018/321) would have had any influence on the investigation of the alleged incident in Douma. Right now, that is not what they are about. There is no need to mislead anybody by saying that, or that there were intensive consultations on the American draft resolution but not on ours, or that most of our amendments were supposedly taken into account. Our colleagues will now tell the press that we vetoed their resolution, while modestly remaining silent about the fact that just as with the draft resolutions on the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, they also vetoed ours.

Yesterday, during the meeting on threats to international peace and security (see S/PV.8225), there was an emotional discussion of the event, or the alleged event, in Douma on 7 April. Based on the results of the inspection conducted by our specialists, we said that a chemical attack could not be confirmed. Nonetheless, we advocated for the speediest possible investigation of all of the circumstances by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and affirmed our willingness to facilitate its work on the ground. The Government of Syria has sent the OPCW an official request that such a mission be dispatched to Douma as soon as possible.

Yesterday, the Swedish delegation put forward a fairly constructive text for a corresponding draft resolution. Unfortunately, their initiative was undeveloped and was trampled down thanks to the confrontational efforts of the United States and its closest allies, which had decided to shift the focus away from the issue of an investigation of what happened on 7 April. That is understandable, because they have already identified the guilty parties. As far as they are concerned, the so-called regime, along with Russia and Iran, is always to blame for everything. The investigation does not interest them. Well, sometimes it does, but only if it is based on so-called exclusive data from the opposition's social networks.

For the hundredth time, I would like to ask the same question yet again. Can someone here explain clearly and plainly why Damascus needed this alleged chemical attack in Douma in principle, especially since practically all of the militias had evacuated Douma by then? And the militias who were still being evacuated on 8 April knew nothing about the alleged occurrence of this chemical attack. I will answer my own question. The provocation was desperately needed by the militias who received that very timely support from the United States and other Western countries.

We decided to develop the Swedish initiative, and our draft resolution notes the Syrian Government's invitation to the OPCW Fact-finding Mission to visit the site of the alleged event without delay. It welcomes the decision of the Director-General of the OPCW Technical Secretariat to send the Mission to Syria in order to conduct investigative work in line with Chemical Weapons Convention standards. It takes into account the guarantees of safe access provided by the Syrian authorities and Russian military forces. Fifteen days later, the Secretary-General would submit the first report to the Security Council.

This is a strictly practical, non-confrontational and depoliticized initiative in support of the OPCW, which would help the specialists in this area determine what did, or rather did not, take place in Douma. And that is the priority now, not the draft resolution on a United Nations independent investigative mechanism, which was hastily submitted for a vote with the obvious aim of seeing both draft resolutions vetoed. We hope that Council members will give this initiative their unanimous support so that the process can begin as soon as possible. According to our information, two

expert groups from the OPCW Fact-finding Mission should leave for Syria by the end of this week.

Whatever the excuse that may be given, if the experts do not reach Douma because they have been prevented by those who continue to speculate about the chemical issue in order to smear Syria and Russia, that will be yet another piece of evidence showing that behind this thoroughly false story are dirty geopolitical games and, what is worse, aggressive military plans capable of reversing the positive trend in the resolution of Syria's conflict and inflicting a painful blow on a region already tormented by adventurist assaults. We are witnessing all of that literally in real time.

We request that you put this draft resolution to a vote, Mr. President.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): We want swift and resolute action today, and we want the Security Council to shoulder its collective responsibility. But I am not sure that we have exhausted all the avenues that could get us there nor am I sure that voting on this new Russian draft resolution (S/2018/322) will get us there either. We feel that we are at a very fragile stage of Council deliberations right now, and we need to reflect carefully on the way forward to ensure that we do not jump into further paralysis, with consequences that will be difficult to defend or repair.

That is why I would like to ask you, Mr. President, to suspend the meeting right here and now so that we can all move into consultations and carefully and collectively reflect on the next step.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked to make a further statement.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We listened carefully to what the Permanent Representative of Sweden has just said. To be candid, we are somewhat puzzled by his statement, because the draft resolution that we submitted (S/2018/322) is, in essence, based on the same idea as the draft submitted yesterday by the Swedish delegation. I do not know what we are going to consult on in consultations. I believe we already consulted on this subject yesterday. However, out of respect for the Swedish delegation and those delegations who would like to hold consultations, we are not against that. But let me say right away that we intend to put this draft resolution to a vote today, after our consultations. We hope that the consultations will be constructive and will not drag on for long, because that is certainly not necessary at this point. We need to adopt this draft resolution in support of the mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in order to establish the facts on the ground as quickly as possible.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): If there is no objection, I will suspend the meeting. We will continue after our consultations.

The meeting was suspended at 4.40 p.m. and resumed at 5.45 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2018/322, submitted by the Russian Federation.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation

Against:

France, Poland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The result of the voting is as follows: 5 votes in favour, 4 against and 6 abstentions. The draft resolution was not adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I will be brief. In the Consultations Room just now, Mr. President, you and the representative of Sweden made valiant attempts at a compromise. We all appreciate what is at stake and thank you for your and Sweden's efforts.

But, fundamentally, the United Kingdom could not vote for the Russian text (S/2018/322) because it does not establish an investigation into who was responsible for the attack. It only welcomes the Fact-finding Mission, which is already on its way. I repeat what I said in consultations: the Fact-finding Mission determines whether chemical weapons were used and, if they were, which chemical weapons were used. It does not, and cannot, establish who was responsible for

their use — and thus start on the first step on the path to attribution and accountability. For that reason, we are not able to support the text. It would be like watching a fire, identifying that there was a fire, and doing nothing to put it out.

The Russians invited us to return to the issue of an investigative mechanism on a separate occasion. I am afraid that the answer to that is 17 November 2017, when Russia vetoed a joint investigative mechanism that it had itself decided to set up.

For all those reasons, all it would have taken is a written decision for an investigation set up by the Security Council. Russia could not take that small step, and therefore we were not able to support the draft resolution. I very much regret that, but the answer was in Russia's hands.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Recent reports concerning the use of chemical weapons in Douma and the consequent civilian casualties have given rise to serious concern on the part of the international community. China has noted that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has already asked its Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic to investigate the relevant reports. We support the OPCW in sending investigators to Syria so as to establish the truth. We call on all parties concerned to cooperate with the investigation.

The draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation (S/2018/322) expresses deep concern about the alleged use of chemical weapons in Douma on 7 April, strongly condemns the chemical-weapons attacks that took place in Syria and elsewhere, urges the OPCW Fact-finding Mission to carry out an on-site investigation, and provides that the Syrian Government and other parties will ensure the security of and safe access to investigators. The draft resolution is in keeping with China's principled position. China supports and voted in favour of the Russian draft resolution.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): We deeply regret that we have ended up here following a long day of serious efforts to move forward by some of us — I believe. We abstained in the voting on the Russian draft resolution (S/2018/322) a few moments ago because the attribution and accountability track, which we believe is important, lacked clarity. We called for consultations earlier because we felt that, provided there was political will, an opportunity remained for us to come together and shoulder our responsibility today.

We put forward a draft resolution (S/2018/321) to all members that we felt was credible and assertive, and was intended to support the Fact-finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. It was also very clear in its determination to establish an impartial, independent and professional investigative mechanism, and we had suggested that the Secretary-General help us recommend the best way forward in that area and give him 10 days to come back to the Council. I believe that would have been a much better way forward than where we are right now.

I am therefore very disappointed that we have not been able to move forward on this. I thank all those members of the Security Council that were ready to engage, and I just hope that we do not consider this the end with regard to ensuring that the facts will be established and that there will be true accountability and no more impunity for the horrendous use of chemical weapons in Syria and elsewhere.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I once again express the frustration of our delegation over this afternoon's negative outcome. We abstained in the voting on the third draft resolution (S/2018/322), first of all because it was submitted only very late today and, secondly, because it is lacking compared to the two previous draft resolutions on which we voted in favour (S/2018/175 and S/2018/321). We believe that we should ask the representative of Sweden, Mr. Olof Skoog, not to withdraw his proposal so that following this meeting — perhaps tomorrow afternoon — as was suggested during consultations, we can continue considering and analysing it to see whether we can agree to vote on the draft resolution once we have introduced amendments and reached a consensus on the text that he has presented.

Mr. Radomski (Poland): Poland voted against the draft resolution (S/2018/322) presented by Russia. We believe that the draft resolution submitted originally by Sweden was an honest attempt to enable the Security Council to respond promptly to the horrific act of violence that occurred in eastern Ghouta on Saturday. To that end, the Security Council needs to re-establish a professional, truly independent and impartial accountability mechanism. The draft resolution proposed by the Russian Federation is missing that important provision. That is why we had to vote against it.

Mrs. Haley (United States): I thank you, Sir, and members of the Security Council for what has been another frustrating day. My parents always said that you should always see the good in everyone and in everything. I have therefore been trying to figure out what the good is in Russia. I believe that it is very good at being consistent, and I believe that it is very good at playing games. We saw that when we took up the issue of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. Russia loved the Joint Investigative Mechanism until we found one side guilty, and then it decided that it did not want it. We then adopted the ceasefire, and Russia loved the idea of the ceasefire until Al-Assad had a problem with it and subsequently violated it. Today Russia vetoed for the sixth time a draft resolution (S/2018/321) condemning Al-Assad for chemical-weapons attacks on his own people. No matter what we do, Russia will be consistent.

Russia will continue to play games, and once again it is putting forward yet another surprise draft resolution (S/2018/322). The first time that any of us saw it was today at 11 a.m. The Russians held no negotiations. It took no input, and, when Sweden asked that the Council be allowed to discuss the draft resolution, Russia allowed that but did not want any changes to it. There is a reason for which Russia did not want to discuss its resolution, and that is because it does not accomplish anything. The draft resolution mainly asks for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to send its Fact-finding Mission to Douma, but the Fact-finding Mission is already travelling to Douma. It already has a mandate to investigate and collect samples. What makes it worse is that Russia includes several provisions in its draft resolution that are deeply problematic and once again seeks to compromise the credibility of the international investigation.

The draft resolution puts Russia and the Al-Assad regime itself in the driver seat for making arrangements for the Fact-finding Mission investigators. We are just supposed to trust that the same Government that says that everything concerning the Douma attack was fake will work in good faith with the OPCW. This draft resolution also tries to micromanage how the Fact-finding Mission should carry out its investigation, while dictating where the investigators should go. As we have always said, for an investigation to be credible and independent, the investigators must choose where they believe they should go. Members of the Council — least of all Russia — should not be calling the shots. For those reasons, the United States voted against the draft resolution.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We voted in favour of the draft resolution (S/2018/322) because we saw value in its adoption as it offered, we thought, the possibility for the protection of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic. Frankly, we tried to find weaknesses in the text. We could not. It is a matter-of-fact and uncomplicated draft resolution. We could not find any reason not to support it. Undoubtedly, it would not have made achieving attribution possible, but finding out whether chemical weapon were in fact used would have been a great achievement.

Of course, so far the Russian position has been that there was no use of chemical weapons in Douma. Establishing the facts surrounding that assertion or position would have been a great achievement. We are not in a position to take advantage of the guarantee offered or the Council's strong support in that regard. We felt that the Fact-finding Mission needed the support.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Frankly speaking, I think all of us have seen everything for ourselves. Unfortunately, the failure to adopt draft resolution S/2018/322 really is a litmus test says a great deal and leaves us extremely apprehensive. We proposed a very innocuous draft resolution, which is moreover virtually a complete repeat of Sweden's draft text from yesterday. I find it difficult to understand which might be the parts where Mrs. Haley read between the lines to di cover our scheming and our trickery. Perhaps the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom answered that when she said that they could not adopt the Russian draft resolution — let us say it out loud — because it was a Russian draft resolution. Then everything was clear.

The United States representative said that we are very good at playing games. I am not sure about that. What I am sure of is that she is very good at making threats, and the threats that the United States is making with regard to Syria should make us all extremely alarmed, because we may be standing on the threshold of some very sad and terrible events. I would once again like to ask the United States to refrain from executing the plans that it may be incubating for Syria. Unfortunately, the refusal of the United States to adopt the draft resolution speaks to the fact that our

American partners and colleagues do not need any real investigation, which is something that we discussed earlier. We regret the fact that the draft resolution was not adopted, although it is true that the Fact-finding Mission will, I hope, reach Syria soon and be able to get to work on its principal mandate, which is establishing the facts about what really happened in Douma.

To repeat what I have said once again, in all innocence, the Russian military and the Syrian Government will provide support to the mission in terms of ensuring its security. I hope that does not raise questions for anyone, because it is simply what must be done. We hope that the Mission will be able to make the trip effectively and without delay.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to start by thanking Sweden for its efforts and attempts to achieve rapprochement and to smooth over the differences among the members of the Security Council. We are disappointed by the Council's inability to reach consensus on this important matter and by the fact that the divisions among Council members unfortunately continue.

We abstained in the voting, despite the fact that the gist of draft resolution S/2018/322 calls for an investigation into what took place in Douma, which is what we called for. The investigation should be undertaken by an international, independent and impartial body, which in this case is the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). However, the OPCW Fact-finding Mission will go to Syria anyway, and the Council welcomed that fact yesterday. There is therefore no need for a draft resolution. What we are looking for is an international, independent, neutral and professional body or mechanism that would investigate the incident and identify the party that has used chemical weapons, if it indeed determines that chemical weapons have been used. That approach will enable the Council to hold the perpetrators accountable, in accordance with resolution 2118 (2013).

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I thank everybody for today's very difficult and unfortunately unproductive day. We voted for the Russian Federation's draft resolution (S/2018/322) on sending a fact-finding mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) as soon as possible because, as we said yesterday in raising this very simple question, we need to know what happened on the ground.

Yesterday we were also very clear when we said that there were different and conflicting reports about the number of casualties and even about the very fact that the chemical attack had taken place. We requested and supported the important proposal that a fact-finding mission should go to Douma to establish the facts on the ground. We are not talking right now about who did it, but we are talking about the fact of the event itself. We needed to understand what was there and what had happened there. Sending a fact-finding mission was very important to us and to all the delegations that do not have a presence there to understand the objective reality of the place. Even if the only information obtained is about the kind of substance that was used, that would be very useful for us to understand who the perpetrators might be and at the very least establish the fact that a chemical attack took place. In this kind of understanding, we very much support sending OPCW experts to investigate on the ground in order to give us information on which we can base an objective opinion about the situation.

We are not taking sides here, and we were very clear about that yesterday. We would like to receive full, objective, transparent and unbiased information about the facts that we are addressing here. We are therefore glad that the OPCW is sending a group to Douma, regardless of the results of today's voting on draft resolutions. We are hopeful that we can at least get this preliminary information about the situation in Douma. I would like to say once again that we in the Security Council should be objective and base our decisions on the simple facts that may be presented to us by the independent organizations that will determine whether there was a chemical attack or not.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): After having vetoed a draft resolution that sought to shed full light on acts of violence involving chemical weapons (S/2018/175), including those that took place last weekend, Russia persists in a dual strategy of obstruction and diversion on the matter. The only aim of the draft text on which we have just voted (S/2018/322) was clearly to confuse the issue. It is not a question of disputing the importance of an independent investigation by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) into what happened in Douma on 7 April. That is essential, and the investigation has already been launched.

However, the Russian draft resolution, which we had to vote against, did not meet the challenges.

Let us be clear: what we lack today, and what Russia continues to reject, is a truly independent and impartial mechanism that can attribute responsibility in order to prevent impunity. That was the raison d'être for the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. With the establishment of the Joint Investigative Mechanism, set up with the involvement of Russia, we put in place a tool for the essential deterrence of perpetrators of chemical attacks. That is clearly what we lack today.

Let us be clear in saying that statements are not enough and that the Russian draft resolution is only a smokescreen that falls well short of the urgent response that the Council should provide. That is why France voted against the draft resolution and why the draft resolution was not adopted.

Today I reiterate that France will spare no effort to ensure that the perpetrators of those chemical horrors are identified and held to account in an independent and impartial way. The stakes are extremely high, and we will not give up.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): We abstained in the voting on the draft resolution (S/2018/322) because we had serious hesitations about the text, as it differed in some crucial aspects from the Swedish text put forward yesterday.

First of all, the text makes it insufficiently clear that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic already has the mandate for on-site visits, as States have to comply with it. They do not need the Council's authorization. Secondly, the text is unduly restrictive. Paragraph 3 is not a correct reflection of the decision of the Director-General or of his existing mandate. The necessity of on-site investigations is up to the team to decide. My third point is that the fact-finding mission should be able to perform its mandate in complete independence. Fourthly, we do not want the precedent that Security Council authorization is needed for a fact-finding mission to do its work. We are convinced that those were issues that we could have solved if the draft resolution had been put forward for proper consultations. We received it this morning. We regret that those concerns could not be taken into account.

My last point is that one colleague said that the litmus test of this evening, and of today, was the voting on this draft resolution. I disagree. The litmus test of today's meeting was the veto by one permanent member on the establishment of an effective attribution mechanism.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall be very brief.

Bolivia voted in favour of the draft resolution (S/2018/322) for several reasons. One of those is that, although the nature of the events that have been condemned is unknown, the highest authorities of the Organization have pointed out that the United Nations is not is a position to verify the reports of such events. It is therefore essential to establish the truth by means of an independent and impartial investigation. Many of those reports come from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and we know who finances those NGOs. Therefore, we must allow doubts with regard to such sources.

Analysing the draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation word by word, from the point of view of intellectual integrity, commitment to the Syrian people or international law, we found no reason to vote against the draft resolution.

Nevertheless, what concerns us is what is being planned outside the structure of this edifice. While it was said today that Lenin and Marx would probably be turning in their graves, I do not know about that. But what is certain is that Churchill and Roosevelt, for example, are turning in their graves because, as founding fathers of the structure of this world order, they endowed the Security Council with the authority to use force to deal with threats to international peace and security. I am not sure that they would be very happy that the outcome of such events, without a full and conclusive investigation, is that some of its members undertake the unilateral use of force. In any case, we remain hopeful that the Security Council will shoulder its responsibility and that, through unity, it can help to identify the perpetrators of any attack against international peace and security, if that is the case.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Peru.

We regret that we were not able to achieve consensus this afternoon on a draft resolution with regard to the delicate situation in Syria. We underscore that the investigation being carried out on the use of chemical weapons must be complemented by an independent, impartial and professional mechanism that attributes

responsibility. That is why we abstained in the voting on this occasion.

We reiterate the need for the Security Council to regain its sense of unity on this very delicate subject so that it can fulfil its high responsibilities and thereby alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people. That is why we will continue to explore options on this important matter.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I remind speakers of the content of presidential note S/2017/507 with regard to the length of statements.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I will give colleagues who are about to leave the Chamber some of my valuable time. They are afraid that I will beat them in the battle of arguments. They become terrified when they hear any opposing views.

Those who just left the Chamber said in their statements that today was a sad day for the non-proliferation regime. I would like to refresh their memories and say that violation of the non-proliferation regime is the speciality of the following Western States. The United States of America used nuclear weapons in Japan. It used chemical and biological weapons in Viet Nam and enriched uranium in Iraq. France used Algerian human beings when it tested its first atomic bomb in the Algerian desert in 1960. In fact, it placed living Algerians in the desert tied to poles, and dropped on them the first French atomic bomb. Britain, of course, conducted all its nuclear tests in its colonies on islands in the oceans. The British Ambassador then says that day was a sad day for the people of Douma.

English is not my mother tongue, but I know that there are no people of Douma. There are inhabitants in Douma. There are Syrian people. There are no people of Douma. However, beyond Marx, Engels and Lenin, I would like to quote from Shakespeare as saying: "Lies shame you. Speak the truth or remain silent".

My British colleague said that Russia does not have the authority to go to Douma and establish whether or not chemicals were used there, stating that it is not within the jurisdiction of our Russian friends, who are on the ground, to go to Douma and investigate the scene. That is quite strange. Britain should have advised itself in the same manner when it sent intelligence officers to Khan Shaykhoun and conferred upon itself the authority to collect samples with the French. They took the samples to British and French laboratories, as they claimed, without coordinating with the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) or the Fact-finding Mission. That is quite the paradox: giving themselves the very right that they deprive others.

Approximately two weeks ago, Britain signed an agreement with the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia for an arms deal worth $100 billion — much bigger than the Al-Yamamah deal — to continue killing people in Yemen, start new wars in the region with Iran and Syria and entrench never-ending wars throughout the entire region. That is what Britain is capable of doing. Mahatma Gandhi knew the British well, and he was right when he said, "If two fish broke out into a fight in the sea, everyone knows it was Britain that started it".

The American colleague said that there is only one monster facing the entire world in defiance today. That monster has financed terrorists in Syria for seven years and provided them with arms. I would say that the monster is the United States, Britain and France. They sponsored terrorism in my country for seven years, and before that they did the same in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya. They sponsored terrorist organizations starting with Taliban and Da'esh, down to the Al-Nusra Front, Al-Qaida, Jaysh Al-Islam, Faylaq Al-Rahman and the White Helmets, which British intelligence newly invented. The monster she spoke of unleashed lies in order to destroy, occupy and send troops thousands of miles throughout the world to destabilize international peace and security. The monster is the American who, thus far, refuses to destroy his chemical arsenal, as we know, yet lectures others on destroying chemical weapons.

My French colleague said that he was horrified by the pictures he saw. But he was not horrified by the pictures of the hundreds of civilians who were killed in the 2016 French air strikes in Toukhar village in the rural area of Manbij. Two hundred civilians were killed, including entire families, by France's war planes. The French Ambassador must not have seen those pictures, and consequently they were not a source of horror for him. The concept of double standards is an understatement for those people.

In response to the web of lies spread by some Western States against my country regarding the

alleged use of chemical weapons in Douma on 7 April, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Syrian Arab Republic sent today, 10 April, an official invitation to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to dispatch a fact-finding mission to Douma in order to investigate the allegations of the use of chemical weapons there and to determine the facts about those allegations. I informed members of the Council of that invitation yesterday in this very Chamber (see S/PV.8225). The Syrian Arab Republic welcomes the visit of the fact-finding mission and stands ready to fully cooperate, provide all forms of assistance to the mission in the discharge of its duties and guarantee the safety of its personnel. It will also facilitate interviewing and sampling in accordance with the terms of reference. Syria looks forward to the fact-finding mission carrying out its work in a full, transparent and professional manner and while relying on credible and tangible evidence. If it does deploy, it will find Douma liberated and it will be granted full access to any location it wishes to visit.

The situation is quite clear. The co-sponsors of the American draft resolution (S/2018/321) do not seek the truth, because it will simply expose them and their terrorist proxies on the ground. Instead of waiting for the OPCW fact-finding mission to determine whether or not toxic chemicals were used in Douma, they present draft resolutions that do not enjoy consensus, nor do they seek truth, but rather establish non-objective mechanisms that pre-empt results in support of their political accusations and agendas. They are aware that a clone of the JIM would not be accepted by the States in the Council that are dedicated to the quest for truth regarding who is using toxic chemicals against Syrian civilians.

In that regard, I underscore that the United States, Britain and France made the JIM fail by thwarting it through politicizing its work, putting pressure on members of its leadership and blackmailing them. Consequently, the JIM lacked credibility and professionalism, as it fabricated reports that accused the Syrian Government based on the so-called open sources, of course including the White Helmets, and false testimonies and fabricated evidence emanating mostly from terrorist groups, most important of which is the terrorist Al-Nusra Front and the White Helmets, which is the British misleading media arm of the Al-Nusra Front.

The scenario that we witness today is exactly similar to what we witnessed a year ago when the United States of America launched a wanton aggression on the Al-Shayrat air base, which was founded on flimsy arguments and fabricated pretexts stating that the Syrian Arab Army used chemical weapons in Khan Shaykhoun. Those allegations were proven false when the United States and its allies prevented the experts of the JIM from visiting Khan Shaykhoun and collecting samples from the Al-Shayrat air base.

Things are crystal clear. The aggression of the United States and its accomplices, throughout history, thrives on lies, deceit and hegemony, as well as on the rule of the powerful. It is a brutal approach that will never respect the rule of law and international legitimacy. For seven years, my country, Syria, has been a stark example of what the United States and Britain did when they unleashed lies, misleading information and fabricated stories in this very Chamber in order to destroy and occupy Iraq. Their actions were grounded on the pretext of a significant lie, that is, the existence of the so-called weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

I am compelled each and every time to remind the Council of the position of former Secretary of State Colin Powell when, in this very Chamber (see S/PV.4701) — and I was sitting where the Deputy Permanent Representative of China is seated today — he presented tapes, documents, maps and pictures that were later discovered to have been produced, faked and fabricated by the American intelligence services for the purpose of invading Iraq. The operation was prepared in advance. The same scenario occurred with Libya.

The truth must be revealed. For centuries the world has witnessed various instances of occupation and hegemony, whose sole purpose was to loot the wealth of nations, occupy land or impose a geopolitical agenda. However, political immorality has reached a depth today to the extent that Libya has been destroyed and many of its people killed to cover up cases of bribery and financial corruption involving the President of a permanent member of the Council that talks about democracy and freedom. It is so low today to the extent that a permanent State regrettably forces Arab oil-exporting countries to foot the bill for its ongoing aggression and military intervention in my country, Syria. It is a business deal forged between the corrupt with the financial means and a mercenary who has weapons and power. Some permanent members of the Council commit acts of aggression against sovereign

countries simply to detract attention from domestic crises and ongoing controversy surrounding their political elite.

Following seven years of a dirty terrorist war that was imposed upon us, we in Syria believe that clear options exist — but they pose a major challenge to the majority of Council members. The Council must refute the lies and reverse the political deterioration that the United States, Britain and France are trying to push the Council towards engaging in. It is up to the Council today, and in the future, to make its decision. World public opinion and the people of the free world will judge whether or not the Council has assumed its responsibility to uphold international legitimacy, maintain international peace and security and protect the world against the horrible terrorism that is used and exploited by those three permanent member countries to undermine the stability and self-determination of States. I call upon the members of the Council to uphold a global, ethical and multilateral political system that believes in international law and in the right of peoples to self-determination, and rejects military, political and economic hegemony.

In conclusion, my country reiterates its condemnation in the strongest terms of any use of chemical weapons by any party, anywhere and under any circumstances. My country stands ready to cooperate with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to reveal the allegations and lies being promoted by some Western parties so as to justify their aggression and serve their own political agenda. Their fleets are now in the eastern Mediterranean, waiting for the veto in order to start their aggression. I would like to inform those Western parties — and they must pay close attention to what I say — that their threats of aggression, manoeuvres, lies and terrorism will never prevent us — as one of the founding States of the Organization — from exercising our duties and rights under the Charter of the United Nations and our national Constitution to protect our sovereignty and territorial integrity and to fend off aggression from any source. We will not allow anyone — big or small, permanent member or non-permanent member — to treat us the way Iraq and Libya were treated.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.